

# Being a good citizen

## Where do I fit in?

**Adolescence** is a period when we mature from a child to an adult. We develop from a person dependent on others to an independent person with our own ideas. During our teenage years, relationships with friends become more important, and we begin to make decisions for ourselves and plan for the future. We develop greater connections with the **community** through our involvement with school and sporting and recreational clubs. It is during this time that we learn how to fit in to society and be a good **citizen**.

As a member of society you have the same **rights** and **responsibilities** as adults, and in some situations you are further protected with extra rights. As a young person under the age of 17, the **law** aims to protect your welfare in the home and the community. But this does not come without some responsibilities. The way in which you behave is also important. A good citizen needs to respect the rights of other citizens. We all have the right to feel safe, be treated fairly and to have an opinion.

**1** Look at the girl in the photograph.

- (a)** In what ways do you think she has changed from a child to a teenager?
- (b)** Is change during adolescence different for boys?
- (c)** She looks a little sad. What issues might this girl be facing at home or school? What could be done to help her?

**2** What are your rights as a citizen?

**3** What are your responsibilities as a citizen?

## You will discover

- How you connect to individuals and groups
- Your personal rights and responsibilities
- Why rules and laws are needed
- Where to go for help if you need it



# Making connections

WE ARE ALL UNIQUE, with our own personal identity. We are also connected to other individuals through family ties, common interests or **community** links such as schools. As individuals connecting with a range of groups and communities, we need to understand how to work together and respect each other's **rights**.



## FAMILY

For most young people, parents, carers and family members provide guidance, support and security as they grow and mature.

## SCHOOL

Schools are not only places where you can learn; they also provide a community atmosphere where you can mix with friends and teachers, try different things, put forward your opinion and be encouraged to do your best.

## You

You have your own physical characteristics, thoughts, skills, ideas and abilities that make you one of a kind.





## FRIENDS

You share interests with friends, for example, hobbies, sports or opinions. As you become a teenager, friends have more of an influence on the way you behave or dress. Good friends will support you when you need it.



## SPORT AND RECREATION GROUPS

Communities provide a range of activities for people to come together. Many young people are members of sports teams or take part in recreational activities with others.



## COMMUNITY

Australian communities consist of a wide range of people of different ages, beliefs and cultures. Respecting each other's rights is an important part of living in a community.



# Activities



## THINK

- Which boy appears in each of the pictures in this spread? List some ways in which he is unique.
- In what way has his family helped shape who he is?
- List the groups the boy is connected to.
- As a class, make a list of community groups that young people can become involved in.
- Look at his group of friends.
  - In what ways are they similar?
  - In what ways are they different?
- Look at the picture of the basketball team.
  - What differences can you see between their body shapes?
  - Why are these differences most notable in people aged between 11 and 14 years?
  - What changes take place in a girl's body during this time?
  - Sometimes teasing points out differences between body shapes during adolescence. How do you think the person being teased feels?
- Look at the picture of the boy skateboarding along the street.
  - In what way might he interfere with the rights of other members of the community?
  - What can he do to make sure this doesn't happen?
- Everybody likes to feel connected to someone or something. Give examples of how the boy might become disconnected from the groups shown in the diagram.

## SELF-DISCOVERY

- Who am I? What makes me unique? What are my likes/dislikes? What influences have shaped me into the person I am today? Draw a picture that reflects the person you are, or write a piece about yourself that covers the questions above. Share your thoughts with a partner.

## I CAN:

- ☐ appreciate that each person is a unique individual
- ☐ understand that we grow at different rates
- ☐ see that we are connected to a number of individuals and groups.

✓ learning

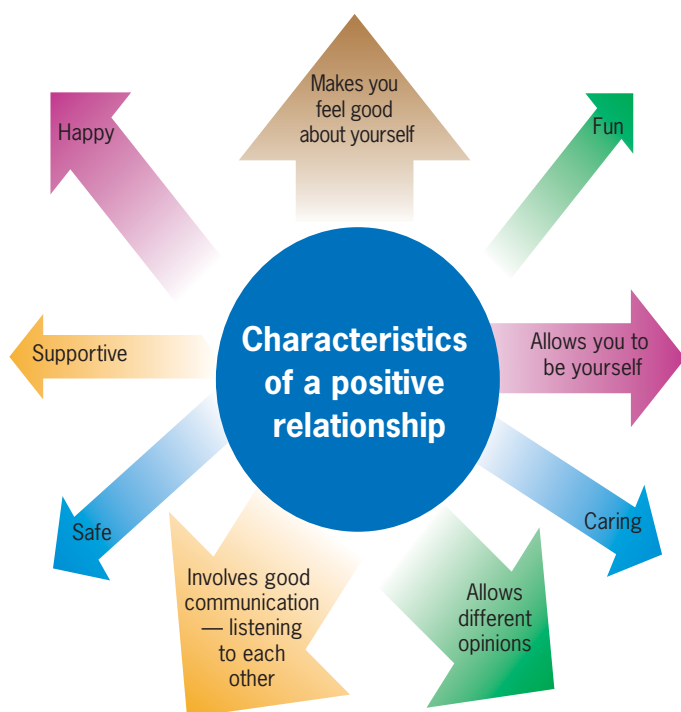


# What are my rights and responsibilities?

**W**E ALL HAVE **RIGHTS**, such as the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect. Everybody also has **responsibilities**, such as accepting that others can have an opinion that is different from your own. Learning and respecting that we each have rights and responsibilities is an important step in becoming a good **citizen**.

## Respectful relationships

Establishing good relationships with friends, family and community relies on respect for each other's rights. You may put forward your views on an issue because you have the right to express it. You must, however, also try to understand the views of others, because they also have a right to express their views. Respect for opposing views is an important part of living in a **democracy**, where all people have equal rights and privileges.



Characteristics of a positive relationship



Everyone has rights and responsibilities in their relationships.

Relationships can sometimes be quite involved, and may change. Here are some ways of improving your relationships with others.

- Listen to the other person and try to understand their point of view.
- Don't put down the other person if you don't agree with them.
- Try to reach a compromise or 'agree to disagree' about some things.
- Be honest and develop trust in the relationship.

## Legal rights of children and parents

### Children's rights and responsibilities

Children and teenagers have a number of rights within the home environment. These rights are often laid down in **laws** made by the federal government or are established by **courts**. These rights are designed to protect you from being abused within the home. Your rights include:

- the right to be free from physical, mental and sexual **abuse**
- the right to be adequately fed, clothed and sheltered
- the right to attend school until the age of 15
- the right to see your parents, even if they are separated
- the right to be assisted by the government when the family structure breaks down.

In return, you have a number of responsibilities. These include:

- the responsibility for behaving in a reasonable manner at home, school and in public
- the responsibility for abiding by laws, which are made to protect other people and their property.

### Parental rights and responsibilities

The law does not aim to interfere within a family, unless some type of abuse is occurring. Parents do have some rights over their children. Their rights are not as extensive as your formal rights. However, parents, as adults, are expected to know what's best for their child. The rights of a parent include:

- the right to determine a child's upbringing and education
- the right to consent to the child's adoption
- the right to take **legal action** on behalf of the child
- the right to discipline a child using reasonable punishment according to the particular situation.

Parents have some important responsibilities they must carry out for their children. If these duties are not adequately completed, the law or social welfare services may become involved with the family. These duties include:

- maintaining the child in a healthy and safe home environment
- sending the child to school until the age of 15.



Daniel Valerio died in 1990, aged just two years of age. He was beaten to death by his abusive stepfather. Soon after, laws were changed to make sure that teachers, police, doctors and nurses reported suspected child abuse cases.

## Activities

### REMEMBER

- 1 List two legal rights and two responsibilities that children have.
- 2 Which of Daniel Valerio's rights were abused by his stepfather?
- 3 What changed after Daniel's death to protect the rights of other children?
- 4 What is democracy and how is it linked to our rights and responsibilities?

### THINK

- 5 Match the following rights with the most appropriate responsibilities.

#### Rights

To feel safe  
To be treated fairly  
To have a say  
To be respected  
To say no

#### Responsibilities

To be respectful  
To accept the right of others to hold an opinion  
To respect others' feelings  
Not to put others down  
Not to harm others

- 6 In small groups, come up with a list of rights and responsibilities for students and teachers while in the classroom.

- 7 Think of examples that show the following behaviours:

- (a) respecting another person's opinion
- (b) showing respect for another person's feelings
- (c) helping another person feel safe.

- 8 Put yourself in the position of the following people and try to imagine how they would feel. Discuss your responses in small groups.

- (a) A *young girl* is called stupid by her classmates for getting the answer to a question wrong in class.
- (b) A *parent* has not heard from his son, who had told him he'd be home three hours earlier.
- (c) A *student* is left to do all the work in a group assignment.
- (d) A *boy* is told he is weak because he refuses to swim across a river.

- 9 For each of the four scenarios in activity 8, suggest how the situation could be improved so that each person feels more comfortable.

### I CAN:

- ☐ understand that I have personal rights and responsibilities
- ☐ see that relationships require compromise and understanding
- ☐ imagine how people might feel if their rights are abused and list some lawful rights of children and their parents.



# Bullying — abusing the rights of others

**B**EING ACCEPTED by their peers is important for most young people. Unfortunately, some young people may be bullied or made to feel different from everyone else. For these people, life can be unpleasant. You can help your **peers** to feel connected by treating them with respect, not using put downs and by looking for the positive things in people.

**Bullying** occurs when a person or group of people use their power over another person to cause harm or to scare them. Bullying behaviours are deliberate and hurtful. Bullying can happen to anyone and is sometimes based on difference.

**Harassment** is a kind of bullying. It can be a one-off or it can be repeated. Harassment is any form of behaviour that is not wanted or is offensive, humiliating or intimidating. Types of behaviour that could be harassment include comments, behaviours or materials that are **racist**, **sexist** or **homophobic** or that put people down.

Some young people say they were ‘just kidding’ or ‘mucking

around’ as an excuse for their behaviour. There is no excuse for bullying and harassing others — no matter what the excuses, bullying and harassment hurt people.

Bullying is a major issue for some children, young people and their parents. A survey of more than 8500 students in Australia (aged 9–17 years) found that the most common forms of bullying experienced ‘often’ during the school year included:

- being called hurtful names
- being teased in an unpleasant way
- being left out of things on purpose
- being hit or kicked
- being threatened with harm.

## Bullying and harassment behaviours

### Physical

- ❖ Hitting
- ❖ Kicking
- ❖ Punching
- ❖ Pushing
- ❖ Pinching
- ❖ Tripping

### Social

- ❖ Spreading rumours
- ❖ Isolating someone from a group
- ❖ Putting someone down
- ❖ Ignoring someone

### Emotional/psychological

- ❖ Stand-over tactics
- ❖ Gestures
- ❖ Teasing
- ❖ Damaging others’ property
- ❖ Forcing someone to do things they don’t want to do

### Verbal

- ❖ Name calling
- ❖ Laughing at someone
- ❖ Chanting

### Sexual

- ❖ Verbal comments of a sexual nature
- ❖ Sexual gestures
- ❖ Unwanted physical conduct
- ❖ Wolf whistling
- ❖ Staring or leering in a sexual manner
- ❖ Intrusive questions about sexual activity
- ❖ Unwanted sexual invitations

### Technology

- ❖ Sending abusive text messages on mobile phones
- ❖ Sending abusive or harassing emails
- ❖ Making sexually explicit comments or asking intrusive questions in chat rooms on the Internet



## Why young people bully

People who bully come in all shapes and sizes, and they bully for many different reasons. Young people who bully others do so because they want to:

- impress others
- entertain themselves and others
- fit in with the crowd or their peer group
- compensate for having few or no friends
- get revenge
- feel more powerful than other people
- gain more power.



Some bullying behaviours are based on **discrimination**. Young people who are seen to be different because they are disabled, come from a different culture or are **same-sex attracted** can be the targets of bullies.

## The impact of bullying

Young people who are bullied are affected in many ways. The emotional impact of bullying can be devastating. It can influence their physical health if they feel stressed and unwell. No-one likes to be put down, threatened or abused. As a result of bullying, young people:

- are often scared
- can feel isolated and alone
- can feel worthless and have low self-esteem
- avoid going to school and, as a result, their school work suffers
- feel anxious and worried
- can become depressed.



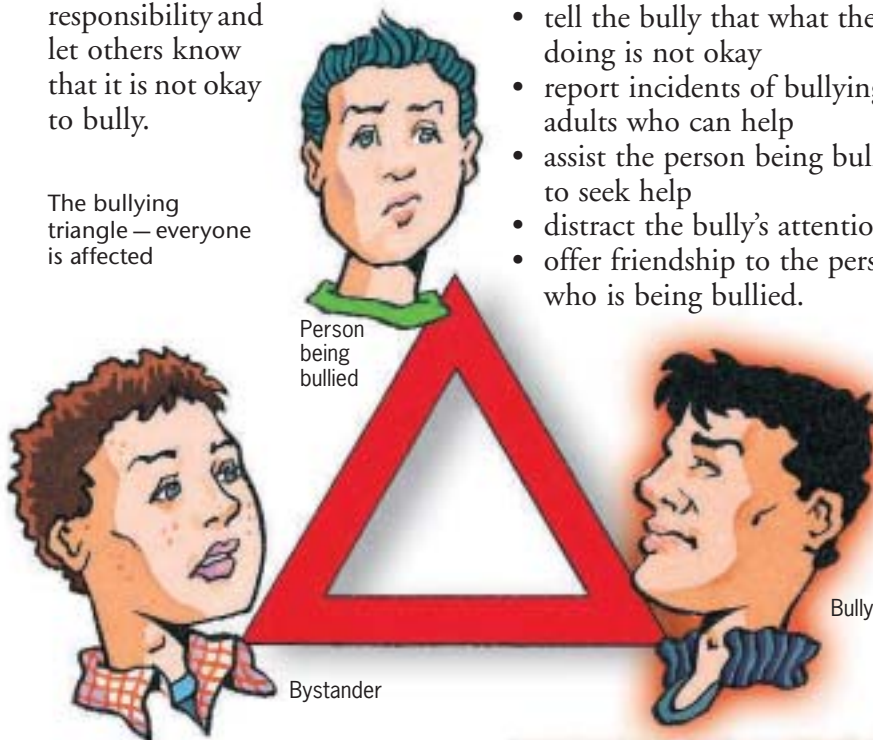
Verbal put-downs are very hurtful, even if you are 'just kidding'. They are a form of bullying.



## No more bullying!

Bullying involves three people: the bully, the person being bullied and the bystander. Bullying affects everyone. Everyone involved in bullying can do things to prevent bullying from happening. It can be difficult for the person being bullied to stop the bullying because they may feel scared. Bystanders need to take some responsibility and let others know that it is not okay to bully.

The bullying triangle — everyone is affected



- ask an adult for help (a teacher or parent)
- don't get involved in hitting back, which will make things worse for you
- keep asking for help until the problem stops.

### If you are a bystander, you can:

- refuse to watch bullying; let the bully know that you are not interested in it
- tell the bully that what they are doing is not okay
- report incidents of bullying to adults who can help
- assist the person being bullied to seek help
- distract the bully's attention
- offer friendship to the person who is being bullied.

### Bullies need to know that:

- it is not okay to bully
- there are other ways to work out differences that do not involve harming people
- their behaviours are harming other people
- seeking help to develop positive strategies to relate to others will help them develop meaningful relationships.

## Technology and bullying

Children and young people are also being bullied via the use of technology. Research shows that mobile phone text messages, emails and Internet chat rooms are being used to bully and harass other people.



### If you are being bullied, you can:

- be assertive: tell the bully that you don't like what they are doing and to stop; say it loudly and look at them
- remind yourself that you are okay and that the bully is doing the wrong thing, not you
- ask your friends to be supportive of you
- try to be with friends so you are not alone
- try to leave valuable items at home
- find another way to go to school, if you are being bullied on the way to and from school
- use humour to distract the bully

## Teachers tackle phone bullies

Teachers in the United Kingdom are to crack down on the latest method of bullying — sending threatening text messages over mobile phones.

New guidelines have been put in force for when students return to schools in September. Pupils caught hi-tech bullying will face being expelled in an effort to stop the growing problem, the government said.

An updated guide to teachers on bullying will explicitly recognise the phenomenon for the first time, the Department for Education and Skills said. Victims will

be encouraged to keep any threatening messages they receive, or a record of them, officials said.

Students who prove their case also could have their mobile phone operators change their phone number for free. Earlier this year, statistics from the children's charity NCH showed that one-quarter of young people had been threatened via their computer or mobile phone, with 16 per cent suffering bullying by text message.

Source: 'Teachers tackle phone bullies', *The Courier-Mail*, 13 August 2002.





Isolating others because they are perceived to be different is a form of bullying.

## Activities

### REMEMBER

- 1 Explain why bullying happens.
- 2 Outline three different ways that bullying affects people.
- 3 List three strategies to help people being bullied or harassed.

### THINK

- 4 How does bullying make you feel?
- 5 Imagine you are being bullied or harassed by another student when you walk to school. Answer the following questions in your workbook.
  - (a) What are some strategies to keep yourself safe from the bullying?
  - (b) To whom would you go to seek help?
  - (c) What might stop you from getting help?
  - (d) How could your circle of friends support you?
- 6 What type of bullying takes place on the Internet and via mobile phones? Suggest some strategies to stop this form of bullying.
- 7 Identify the barriers to stopping or reporting bullying and harassment. Identify some strategies to overcome these barriers.

### TEAMWORK

- 8 (a) In a group of four, after reading each of the scenarios described in the box on the right, discuss and determine:
  - (i) whether bullying is taking place
  - (ii) and if so, what type of bullying.
- (b) In your group, brainstorm strategies the person being bullied and bystanders could use to counter the bullying identified in these scenarios.

- A 13-year-old boy doesn't fit the gender stereotype for boys. He is called names, including 'girl', 'fag' and 'poofster' by the other boys in his class.
- A year 8 girl is well developed for her age. Boys in year 10 wolf whistle at her in the playground and ask her if she wants to have sex with them.
- A year 8 boy is kicked and his bag is thrown in the garbage bin by a bigger boy in his class.
- A year 7 girl is ignored by her peer group, and they start to send abusive text messages to her mobile phone.
- A year 10 boy puts a pornographic picture in a female classmate's book.
- A year 9 girl demands lunch money from students in year 7.

### COMMUNICATE

- 9 Research on the Internet to find websites that address the issue of bullying. Develop a fact sheet on bullying. Include information on:
    - what bullying involves
    - types of bullying
    - the impact of bullying
    - what to do if you are being bullied.
- For a list of useful addresses go to [www.jaconline.com.au/humanitiesalive/ha1](http://www.jaconline.com.au/humanitiesalive/ha1) and click on the Help for Kids weblinks for this chapter.

### I CAN:

- ☐ see that bullying has a large impact on the self-esteem of young people
- ☐ recognise that there are many different types of bullying and harassment behaviours
- ☐ understand that as a bystander there are ways to help a person who is being bullied.



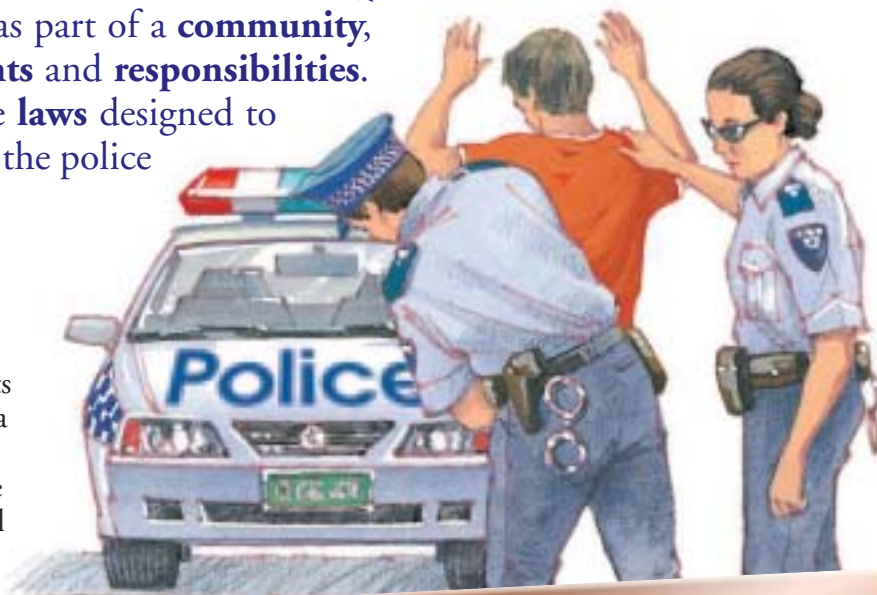
# Your rights as a citizen

A **CITIZEN** is someone who lives as part of a **community**, and therefore has certain **rights** and **responsibilities**. We rely on **governments** to create **laws** designed to protect our rights, and **courts** and the police force to uphold these laws.

## Living in a democracy

Australia is a **democracy** in which all its citizens have a right to decide, by vote, whom they want to represent their interests in the government of the country. The idea of democracy came from the Ancient Greeks (see pages 82–3). The main feature of a democracy is that all people have equal rights and privileges. It also means that the power rests with the people. If the people do not like what the government is doing, they can vote to remove it.

As Australian citizens we expect our government to protect our basic rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Our governments create laws to protect the rights of its citizens and improve the quality of their lives. These laws are interpreted by courts and enforced by police.



### Police enforce laws

- Police do not make the laws; they only enforce the laws that all people must obey.
- They also prevent and detect crime, protect life and property, and maintain peace and order.

### Politicians make laws

- Parliament is our main law-making institution.
- It can make new laws and changes existing ones.
- These laws are binding on all courts and judges.
- It is the responsibility of all people to obey these laws.



### Courts interpret laws

- Courts interpret the laws set down by parliament.
- Courts settle disputes between citizens.
- Judges have the ability to create law through the decisions they make when hearing a case.



**1** In the cartoon below, find examples of citizens exercising the following rights.

- (c) how the right is being ignored (i.e. being spied on by a neighbour).
- 3** What role do you think the following institutions play in ensuring that citizens' rights are protected?
- (a) Government
  - (b) School
  - (c) Police
  - (d) Parents
  - (e) Environmental groups
  - (f) Courts
  - (g) Charities
- 4** Explain why some Aboriginal groups in Australia feel their land rights are being ignored.

**5** To set out the rights of citizens of the United States, a Bill of Rights was attached as a set of 10 amendments to the constitution of the United States.

- (a) In your own words, make a list of the rights that are protected under the amendments.
- (b) What does the second amendment really mean? How might this right interfere with rights of other citizens?
- (c) Australia has no Bill of Rights. Using the example from the United States, select the important rights that you would include in an Australian Bill of Rights. Add any other important rights that you would like to include.

# ✓ Learning

- ☐ understand the main features of a democracy
- ☐ identify institutions that make and uphold laws
- ☐ use ICT skills to research the United States' Bill of Rights.





# A citizen's responsibilities

ALTHOUGH CITIZENS of Australia generally enjoy a number of **rights**, they must also exercise **responsibility**. A responsible citizen is someone who takes action to ensure that his or her **community** is healthy, safe and secure.

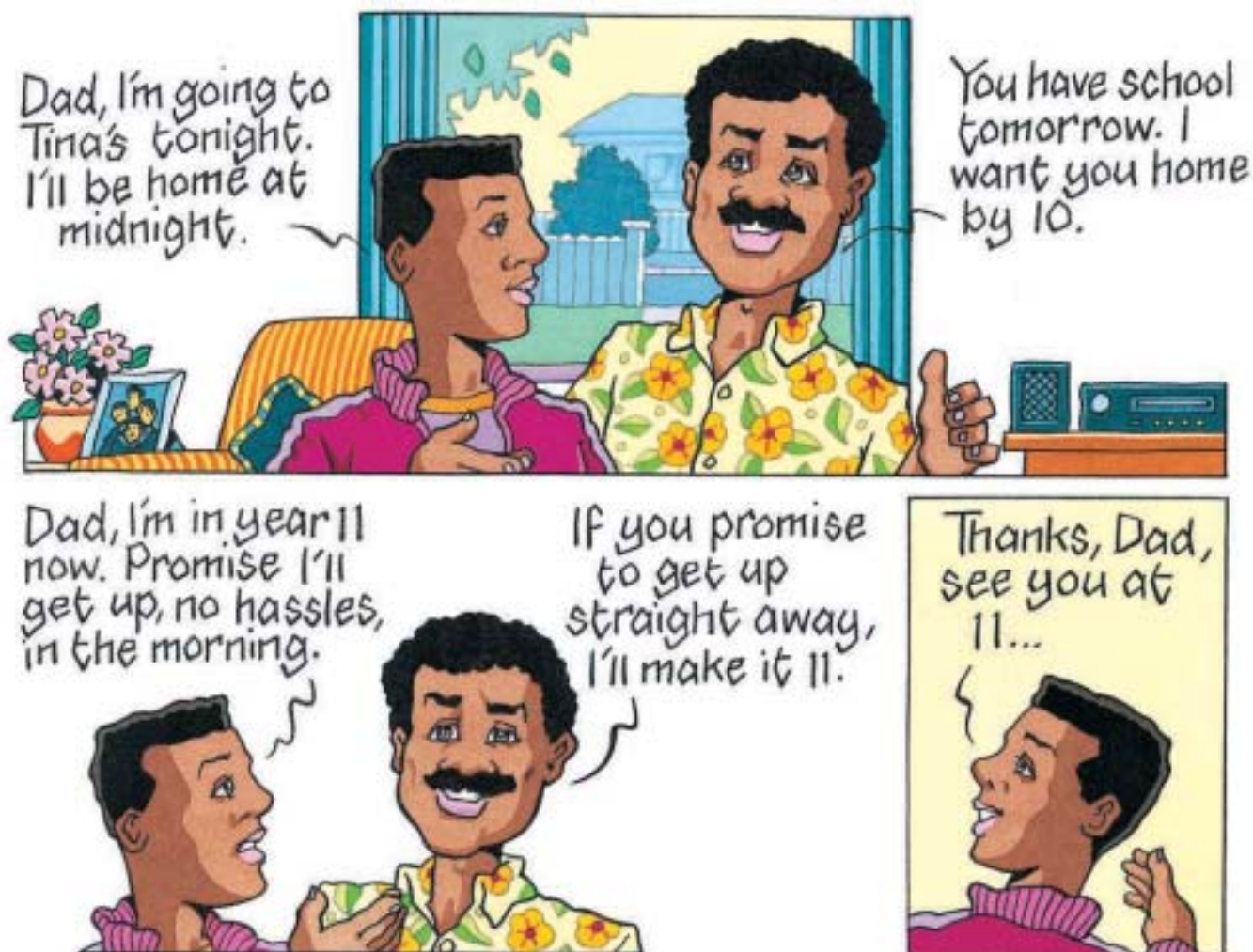
## How can you be a responsible citizen?

1. You can demonstrate your individual responsibility by:
  - respecting the rights of other citizens
  - acting in a positive and supportive way towards family, **peers** and your community
  - showing honesty and dependability in your dealings with other people
  - dealing with conflict in an appropriate manner.

### CASE STUDY — Dealing with parental conflict

You will have arguments with your parents over issues such as chores around the house, how late you can stay up, the friends you choose or how much homework you do. When you are involved in conflict with your parents, try to:

- try to state your opinion clearly and calmly, and then listen to what your parents have to say in response
- understand that your parents have experience and what they are saying may be in your best interests
- reach a compromise where there is a difference of opinion
- honour agreements you make so your parents know they can trust you
- remember that your parents are acting in your best interests.





2. You can promote a healthy and safe community by:

- maintaining your own healthy lifestyle
- acting safely in the home, at school, on the road and in the community
- respecting the rights of other people's property and to personal safety
- learning about actions to take when dealing with risks in your community (for example, bushfires).

**CASE STUDY — Neighbourhood Watch**

Neighbourhood Watch has been in operation in Australia since 1983. The program is designed to make the residents of a community aware of what is going on around them, and more conscious about safety within their own home and within the community they live in. The aims of the program are:

- to reduce the instances of preventable **crime**
- to increase the reporting of crimes within the community
- to increase the level of personal and household safety within the community
- to reduce the fear of crime
- to improve the quality of information and support for communities
- to deter criminal activity within the community.



The program has been very successful. Each Neighbourhood Watch area has a police officer assigned to it. The officer's duties include attending the area's meetings with residents to talk about local issues and crimes that have occurred. A newsletter is printed and distributed to everyone in the area. It describes crimes that have occurred within the area and other related issues.

3. You can understand your obligations as an Australian citizen by:

- obeying laws that protect individual rights and property
- enrolling to vote when you are 18 years of age
- paying your taxes to help build better community services
- knowing that, in times of war, you may be asked to defend your country.



## CASE STUDY — Graffiti

**Graffiti** is the marking of another person's property without their consent. It is a form of **vandalism** that includes leaving marks or symbols through spray painting, writing, scratching or slashing. Graffitiists gain pride and recognition from trying to show their artistic skills, marking a territory or making a statement. Research shows that approximately 60 per cent of graffitiists who are brought before the courts are young people.

Local **communities**, governments and police have tried various methods to discourage graffiti, including:

- increasing the visibility of areas through better lighting or clearing trees
- quickly cleaning up graffiti
- asking groups of citizens to look after a park or a community facility
- making offenders remove graffiti in their community
- involving young people in the design of the local environment
- providing social activities for young people in the local community.

4. You can take part in activities that promote the public good by:
- becoming aware of what is going on (for example, reading newspapers)
  - taking an interest in local issues, such as the building of a new skate park
  - communicating your views by writing a letter to a newspaper or politician
  - participating in activities to protect and improve the environment.



The Warringah Council in Sydney provides public space, aerosol art classes and spray paint to local youths to encourage legal street art.

## CASE STUDY — Clean Up Australia Day

Hundreds of thousands of community-minded Australians help to clean up their local environment on Clean Up Australia Day. It is Australia's largest annual environmental campaign. Since 1990, volunteers have collected over 4.7 million household wheelie bins full of rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day. Individuals and local

groups can either join an existing site or register a new one. Clean Up Australia Day founder, Ian Kiernan, launched Clean Up the World in 1993. Now more than 37 million people in 128 countries around the world have taken this simple Australian idea and used it to improve the health of their environment.



Ian Kiernan and volunteers on Clean Up Australia Day





## Activities

### REMEMBER

- 1 Try to think of your own definition of responsibility.
- 2 Give two examples of community activities that show responsibility.
- 3 What is the difference between a right and a responsibility?
- 4 What are the similarities between rights and responsibilities? Give an example to illustrate your answer.
- 5 Match the following list of rights with the most appropriate item from the list of responsibilities.

#### Rights

Right to safety  
Right to privacy  
Right to vote  
Right to religious freedom  
Right to express opinions  
Right to education  
Right to good health

#### Responsibilities

Allowing other people to be heard  
Respecting other beliefs  
Behaving well in the classroom  
Not spying on people  
Driving carefully  
Maintaining a clean environment  
Taking an interest in community issues

### THINK

- 6 Look at the cartoon showing a conflict between the boy and his parent.
  - (a) How did the conflict arise?
  - (b) What compromise did they reach?
  - (c) Why is it important that the boy follows through with his promise?
  - (d) Give an example of a conflict you have had with your parents and how it was resolved. Could there have been a better outcome? How?
- 7 Read the information about graffiti.
  - (a) What rights are being ignored by graffitiists?
  - (b) Make a list of sites you know of where graffiti exists. Do these sites have anything in common?
  - (c) What are three ways in which communities are trying to discourage graffiti? Which do you think is the most successful? Why?

- 8 Prepare and complete a table similar to the following for your household. Under each person, list some of the important responsibilities that person has in your home. For example, your parents or guardians have the responsibility of providing food, shelter and clothing for you.

Household member	Responsibilities
Dad	
Kate (18 year-old sister)	

- 9 Which responsibilities are often argued over in your household? One example might be washing the dishes. What are some others?
- 10 What additional responsibilities do you think you will take on in the next five years?

### COMMUNICATE

- 11 Try to think of one way you can take responsibility to protect the environment. In small groups, choose one environmental issue to research. Present to the class a short report, in poster format, which includes the following:
  - the extent of the problem
  - the cause of the problem
  - how to fix the problem
  - responsibilities of those involved
  - responsibilities of governments
  - responsibilities of individuals.
 Use the Internet to find more information about your environmental issue. Use key words in your search; for example, logging, recycling.

#### I CAN:

- ☐ understand what some of my personal responsibilities are as a citizen
- ☐ list some different ways in which conflict situations in the home can be resolved
- ☐ think of suitable ways to deal with graffiti and identify ways in which I can help protect the environment.



# The need for laws

YOU HAVE TO OBEY rules at school or on the sporting field. Society also has a set of rules called **laws**, which everyone in the community is expected to obey. For example, motorists have to obey traffic laws. There are also laws to stop people under a certain age from entering premises where alcohol is served. The difference between a rule and a law is that the police and the courts can enforce laws. Laws, therefore, are legal rules. This means that a person can be taken to court and penalised if he or she breaks the laws.

## The law breakers

‘We can’t cross now,’ said Jamahl. ‘The “Don’t Walk” sign is showing.’

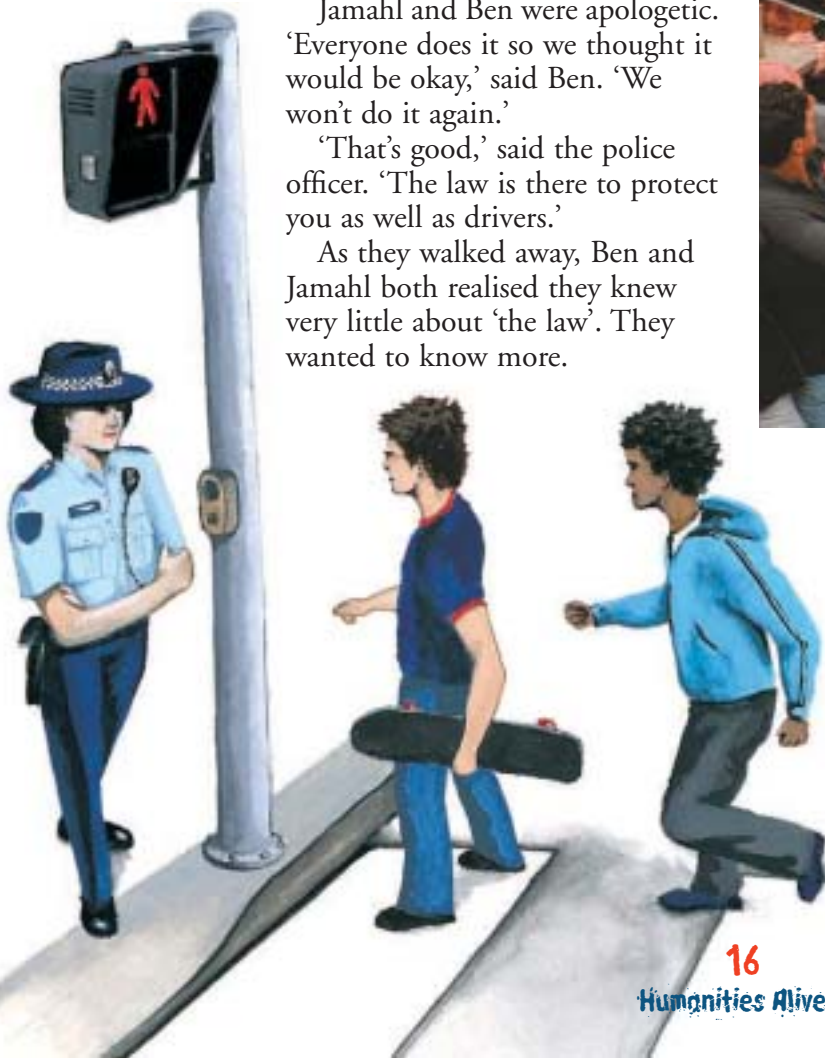
‘It’s okay, just hurry,’ yelled Ben. ‘There are no cars coming.’

When they reached the other side of the busy intersection, a police officer approached them. ‘Do you realise that it is illegal to disobey a “Don’t Walk” sign? If I see you breaking the law again, I will have to **fine** you.’

Jamahl and Ben were apologetic. ‘Everyone does it so we thought it would be okay,’ said Ben. ‘We won’t do it again.’

‘That’s good,’ said the police officer. ‘The law is there to protect you as well as drivers.’

As they walked away, Ben and Jamahl both realised they knew very little about ‘the law’. They wanted to know more.



Without laws, society would be in a state of anarchy.

## Why do we need laws?

Imagine what could happen if there were no laws and people could do whatever they liked. Confusion and chaos would occur. In extreme cases of conflict, a state of **anarchy** would develop. The person with the most strength would start to dominate, and the weak and helpless would suffer. However, when people obey the law, a sense of order is created, resulting in a society where people can live peacefully.





The law therefore has three main roles:

1. *Protection* — from the actions of others as well as our own behaviour. It does this by telling society what people *cannot* do. For example, we cannot commit assault, **murder** or robbery. We cannot drive while drunk or ride a bike without a helmet. In this role, the law restricts our individual freedom but provides safety for all individuals in society.



2. *Freedom* — to do many things by telling society what people *can* do. For example, the law allows us to own and operate a business, drive a car, get married or divorced, or leave school.

3. *Resolution of disputes* — in order to stop people taking the law into their own hands. The legal system provides a police force (or service), court system, and correctional centres (jails and juvenile detention centres) to enforce and administer the law.

If society has too many laws, people's freedoms are severely restricted. However, a society that does not have enough laws turns to chaos, and people become very unhappy. So it is important for society to achieve a balance between too many and too few laws.



The police force, like the courts and correctional centres, are part of our legal system.

## Activities

### REMEMBER

- 1 What are laws?
- 2 How are laws of the land different from school or sport rules?
- 3 What is meant by the term 'anarchy'?
- 4 Why does society need laws?

### THINK

- 5 Imagine if there were no laws and all citizens acted responsibly. Would there be a need for any laws? If so, what laws would be required?
- 6 Provide three examples of things the law says you (a) cannot do (b) can do.
- 7 Write a short story or create a cartoon about a city that has no traffic laws.

### TEAMWORK

- 8 Obtain a copy of your school rules. In groups of three or four, answer the following questions.
  - (a) Do you think your school rules are laws? Explain.
  - (b) Who makes these rules?
  - (c) What might happen if these school rules did not exist?
  - (d) What happens if someone breaks the rules?
  - (e) Are there too many or too few rules? Why?
  - (f) What rules would you like to get rid of? Why?
  - (g) What rules should be introduced? Why?
- 9 Are there situations in which breaking a law could be acceptable? For example, what do you think about a group of environmental activists who break the law when protesting against tree clearing? With this in mind, debate the following topic: 'It is acceptable to break the law sometimes'.

### ICT

- 10 Use the Internet to find out the age at which a person in Australia can legally:
  - (a) drive a car on a public road
  - (b) drink in licensed premises
  - (c) get married
  - (d) buy cigarettes
  - (e) leave school.

You will find the information you need by going to [www.jaconline.com.au/humanitiesalive/ha1](http://www.jaconline.com.au/humanitiesalive/ha1) and clicking on the Victoria **Legal Aid** weblink for this chapter.

### I CAN:

- ☐ distinguish between a rule (such as a school or sporting rule) and a law
- ☐ understand why a society needs to have laws in place for its people
- ☐ explain how laws protect individuals and encourage certain freedoms.



# Juvenile crime

UNFORTUNATELY many young people break the law. Juveniles — people under the age of 17 — commit 41 per cent of the shopstealing offences, 36 per cent of motor vehicle thefts and 25 per cent of burglaries. However, young people do not commit many violent **crimes** — they represent only four per cent of the people committing **homicide**. As these statistics reveal, it is usually the crime of shopstealing that results in a young person's encounter with the legal system.

## Shopstealing — how serious is it?

Shopstealing, or shoplifting as it is sometimes called, is a form of theft. It is one of the most common crimes committed in Victoria. It is so common that many young people believe it is not a serious crime because it may only involve fairly inexpensive items. You may hear people jokingly say that something was a 'five-finger discount at walk-away prices'.

However, shopstealing is a serious crime. If caught, a young offender might be given an official **police caution**. The young person must not re-offend during the next five years. If they do, the old and new issue will be taken to **court**. Otherwise, their record will be wiped clean.

## Why do young people shopsteal?

Although there is no single cause why young people shopsteal, police believe the main reasons include:

- peer group pressure
- being dared by others
- wanting to look cool in front of friends
- thrill-seeking.

Some people cannot afford to buy so they steal. Unfortunately for some, what might start out as a 'one-off' event becomes a habit.

If an adult is caught shopstealing, the store will call the police. The offender will be **arrested**, fingerprinted and then charged under the Crimes Act with 'stealing from a retail store'. So taking goods from a store is theft if it is done on

purpose. It is also considered to be shopstealing to change price stickers on goods and then attempt to buy goods for the cheaper price.

If a person has been charged previously, she or he may be given a jail sentence. Young people who are caught shopstealing may be spoken to firmly by the store owner, given an on-the-spot warning by the police, issued with an infringement notice of \$100 or charged.

It is estimated that Australian stores lost approximately \$1.8 billion through shopstealing in 2003. This serious and costly problem should concern us all, not just the store owners. To cover the costs of shopstealing, the retailer must raise the prices of goods. By passing on the costs to consumers, we all end up paying for shopstealing.



## Interpret a table

A table provides a range of data, arranged in columns (reading down) and rows (reading across). It presents a great deal of information in a small amount of space.

*Note column and row headings, and the table heading. These give meaning to the data presented.*

*Look for steady patterns (increasing or decreasing data) and for usual results or trends.*

*Note any especially high or especially low figures.*

### Alleged offenders processed in Victoria, 2002–2004

Juveniles prosecuted	Total	Robbery	Assault	Homicide	Rape	Theft of motor vehicle	Drug offences	Theft (shopsteal)
2002–2003	24 927	700	2 140	1	53	1 808	571	4 816
2003–2004	23 051	585	2 157	10	90	1 620	556	3 811
% increase	–7.5	–16.4	+6.8	+900.0	+69.8	–10.4	–2.6	–20.9

(Source: Victoria Police 2003/2004 Provisional Crime Statistics. Adapted from [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au). Produced by the Statistical Services Division, Victoria Police)





Shopstealing ...



may get you **charged** by police,



resulting in a court appearance.



## Activities

### REMEMBER

- 1 What is the most common crime committed by juveniles?
- 2 Why do young people shopsteal?

### THINK

- 3 Whose rights are shopstealers ignoring?
- 4 Which responsibility of an Australian citizen are shopstealers ignoring?

### TEAMWORK

- 5 Read the following cases:

**CASE A** Mrs Agostini walked up to the corner store to buy a loaf of bread. Entering the store, she sees that the owner, a good friend, is busy. Instead of waiting to pay, she takes the bread. She means to pay for it when she is next in the shop.

**CASE B** Justine took her five-year-old brother Troy shopping with her. While in the supermarket, Troy opened a packet of lollies and ate them. Justine pretended not to notice and left the store without paying for them.

**CASE C** Andrew and Dahl had carefully planned how they could shopsteal the CDs without being caught. While Dahl talked to the sales assistant, Andrew picked up the CDs and put them inside his jacket. He walked out first, with Dahl leaving a couple of minutes after him.

In groups of four or five:

- (a) decide whether there has been a theft in each case
- (b) decide whether each person should be punished the same way and why
- (c) select a member from each group to report back to the rest of the class
- (d) conduct a class discussion on the results of each group's decision.

### COMMUNICATE

#### Interpret a table (p. 18)

- 6 What was (a) the most common offence committed in Victoria in 2000–2001 and (b) the least common offence committed in 2001–2002?
- 7 Which crime had (a) the highest and (b) the lowest percentage change between the two years?
- 8 Provide possible reasons for the decrease in the number of
  - (a) shopstealing offences
  - (b) drug offences
  - (c) motor vehicle theft.

#### I CAN:

- ☐ list the main crimes committed by young people and identify the main reasons why young people shopsteal
- ☐ appreciate the difficulties in determining punishment for juvenile offenders
- ☐ analyse a table to interpret crime statistics and formulate hypotheses.



# Where can you go for help?

**G**OOD CITIZENS help and support one other. Responsible and trustworthy friends help provide a supportive network for others. When issues become more difficult, further help is available from family members, teachers, **school counsellors, youth workers** and many other community services.

## Recognising the risk

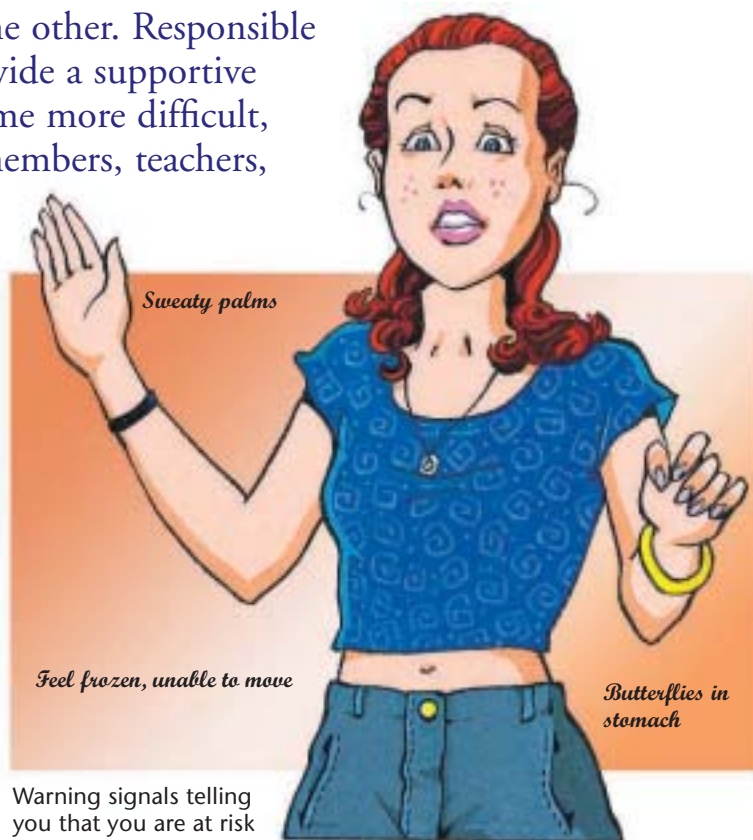
Sometimes young people are faced with very difficult situations. They may have to deal with the death of a loved one or the break-up of their parents' marriage. Some children may be bullied at school or in an abusive relationship where a person in a more powerful position is causing them harm. Recognising that there is a problem is the first step in planning to support yourself, one of your friends or a family member.

## Seeking help

Everyone has times in their lives when they face issues they don't know how to fix.

Developing a trusted support network of friends and adults is important in helping young people deal with difficulties in their life. There are many people at your school and in the community who have the knowledge and expertise to provide good support. To help identify the types of support available in your local community you could:

- ask your school counsellor or teacher
- call the Kids Help Line
- call or visit a youth health service
- ask your doctor
- use an Internet search engine
- ask a police officer.

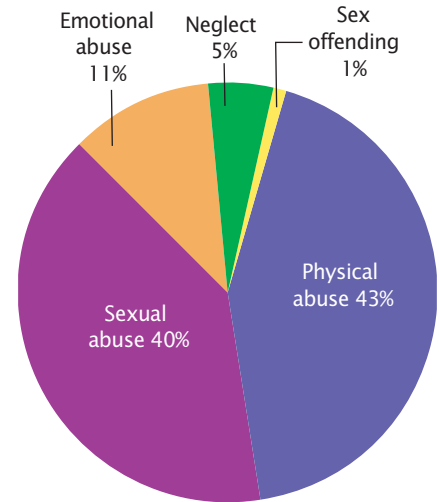


Warning signals telling you that you are at risk



The Youthlaw (opposite) and Kids Help Line sites are just two examples of websites available for young people dealing with issues.





The Kids Help Line received 5154 contacts from young people suffering abuse in 2003-04. Nearly 80 per cent of the calls came from girls.

## Activities



### REMEMBER

- 1 List four personal warning signals telling you that you are in a harmful situation.
- 2 What difficult situations might a young person face?
- 3 What support is available to young people in need of help?

### THINK

- 4 Look at the following photograph.



- (a) What situation has this young person found himself in?
  - (b) What circumstances might have led him to end up here?
  - (c) What support services do you think this person needs?
- 5 Complete the following table after reading each of the following scenarios.

Scenario	How youth is feeling	Risk to youth	Support required

#### Scenario 1

A five-year-old girl is sent to school even though she is sick. Her single father can't afford to miss work to stay home and look after her, and does not have enough money to take her to the doctor.

#### Scenario 2

A 16-year-old boy has recently been kicked out of home by his abusive father. He felt that he had no-one to turn to, so he is sleeping on the streets.

#### Scenario 3

A brother aged 10 and sister aged 13 have an alcoholic, single mother. She is abusive and neglects their needs. Some nights she will leave them on their own and they don't know where she is. The two children do all the cooking and cleaning around the house, including cleaning up after their mother.

#### Scenario 4

A concerned teacher speaks to the student welfare officer about a 14-year-old female student who has suddenly become withdrawn. She finds it hard to concentrate in class and will not interact with other students. She misses many classes at school and always looks tired.

### DESIGN AND CREATIVITY

- 6 In groups, or by yourself, design a campaign to help young people deal with an issue such as a family break-up, shopstealing, drug abuse, graffiti, teenage suicide, sexual abuse, bullying or homelessness.
  - Investigate the issue to find out why it occurs and how we can help.
  - Design a product, such as a program or information kit, to help young people deal with this issue and find people who can give support.
  - Produce a product to share with other students in the class.
  - Evaluate your product and those of other students in the class.

#### I CAN:

- ☐ recognise some of the warning signals telling me that I am in a harmful situation
- ☐ find a number of community groups that can help young people
- ☐ design a campaign to help young people deal with important issues that may confront them.



# Check and challenge

## Being a good citizen



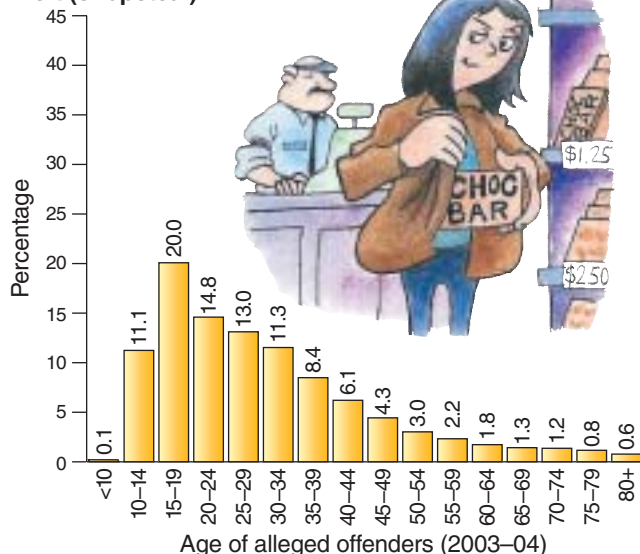
1. Look at the following cartoon.



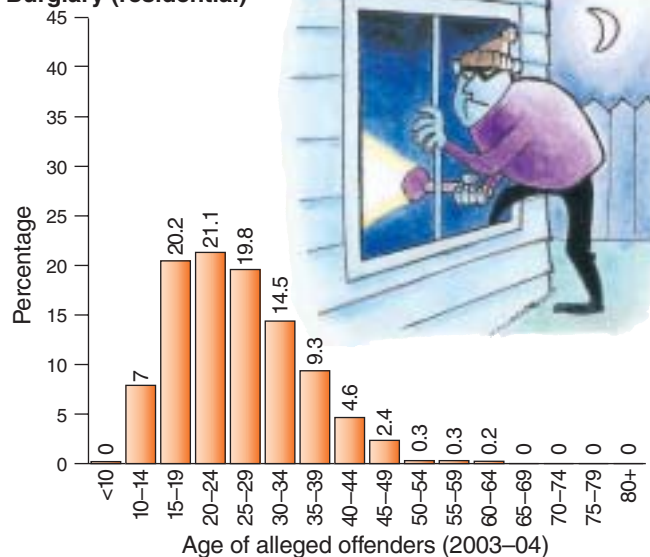
- What conflict is Jen having with her parents?
  - What action could she take to improve her situation?
  - What action could Nathan take to help?
- List three of your personal rights.
  - List three of your rights as an Australian citizen.
  - Why do children have more rights than adults?
  - Look at the graphs below.

- What is shopstealing?
- Which age group is responsible for most shopstealing crimes?
- Why does this group commit this crime?
- What action is likely to be taken against an individual caught committing the crime?
- Compare the patterns of shopstealing with burglary. What are the similarities and differences?

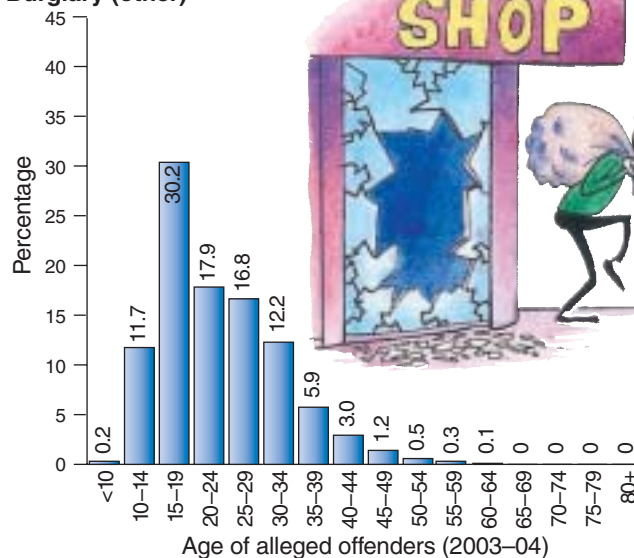
**Theft (shopsteal)**



**Burglary (residential)**



**Burglary (other)**



- How is bullying an abuse of a person's rights?
- List three different support groups or individuals for a person suffering bullying or another form of abuse.
- Complete the following sentences.
  - If I am being bullied, I can ...
  - If I am a bystander to a bullying incident, I can ...
  - Bullies need to know that ...



- 

Source: [www.seven.com.au/todaytonight](http://www.seven.com.au/todaytonight).  
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# Summary of key terms

**abuse:** to treat someone badly or wrongly

**adolescence:** the time during which we mature from a child to an adult

**anarchy:** disorder or confusion due to the absence of government or laws

**arrest:** to apprehend, or take into custody, in connection with a legal proceeding

**bullying:** when a person or group of people use their power over another person to cause harm or to scare them

**citizen:** member of a society

**community:** body of people living in the same locality

**court:** a place where people can resolve their disputes relating to the law

**crime:** an unlawful action for which a penalty will be imposed upon the person who has committed it

**democracy:** a form of government in which the people determine how they will be ruled

**discrimination:** when people are treated differently or less favourably because of their personal characteristics, such as sex, nationality or religion

**fine:** a sum of money paid as punishment

**government:** the system by which a community, region or country is managed

**graffiti:** a form of vandalism that involves the marking of another person's property without their consent

**harassment:** a kind of bullying. It is any form of behaviour that is not wanted or is offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

**homicide:** the killing of one person by another

**homophobia:** fear, dislike or hatred of people who are homosexual (same-sex attracted)

**law:** a legal rule

**legal action:** when one party prosecutes another because a wrong has been done to them or to protect a right

**murder:** the intentional killing of one person by another

**peer:** people of similar age and background, who share many of the same interests

**police caution:** a form of punishment in which the police give a warning to a person who has committed an offence

**racist:** to judge people by their race rather than their personal qualities

**responsibility:** the obligation to be morally accountable for actions

**right:** what is just or fair treatment; something you are entitled to

**same-sex attracted:** being emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the same sex (i.e. gay or lesbian)

**school counsellor:** the person at a school who deals with the overall welfare of the students. They are also referred to as the student welfare coordinator.

**sexist:** to judge a person by their sex rather than their personal qualities

**vandalism:** the deliberate destruction of property

**youth worker:** a person who helps teenagers with their problems